

# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

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[HTTP://OFP.SCC.WA.GOV/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)

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### ***Thurston County awarded farmland planning grant***



The Washington State Office of Farmland Preservation recently awarded Thurston County a farmland preservation technical assistance grant of \$25,000 for the development of farmland preservation programs. Thurston County is one of eight grant recipients statewide.

"Given the difficult economy at all levels of government, we wanted to be able to provide some financial assistance to counties so they can help their local farmers" said Ron Shultz, Policy Director of the State Conservation Commission.

Grant funding will be used to help develop a county Purchase of Development Right (PDR) ordinance which is a major step in preserving working farms. This ordinance would create a mechanism for determining priority working lands. This mechanism will allow the county to rank properties and

create a list of high priority farms to preserve with PDR's. This ordinance will be developed in coordination with the County's Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Work accomplished through the grants will be completed by June 30, 2011.

"The grant will enable the County to continue to create long-term opportunities for the agricultural community. We believe in the need to support the local food production system in the county. It's good for the environment, it's good for our health and it's good for our economy. A PDR ordinance is one of the strategies identified by the Working Lands Preservation Plan recently adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. So we are excited that we will have the opportunity to build on the momentum that was created with the Working Land Plan", noted Cliff Moore, director of the Thurston County Department of Resource Stewardship.

### ***Recruitment for AgForestry Leadership Class 34 has begun!***

The deadline for receiving completed applications in the Foundation office is April 30, 2011. The first seminar for Class 34 will be in October 2011.



Fellowship application forms and instructions can be obtained from the website: [www.agforestry.org](http://www.agforestry.org) or you can call Melisa (509-926-9113) or email her at [melisa@agforestry.org](mailto:melisa@agforestry.org)

If you want application packets sent directly from the Foundation office, please provide the name, address, occupation, email and phone number---you can also do this at [www.agforestry.org](http://www.agforestry.org) by clicking on "Apply" and then "Leadership Referral".

The Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation (AgForestry) is a leadership development program founded in 1978 for adults working within and connected to Washington State's agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries. They believe that strong leadership is vital to having healthy farms, forests, near-shore environments, and rural communities.

The AgForestry Leadership Program develops the skills, knowledge and desire of messengers for the better understanding and advancement of natural resources and rural communities of Washington State.

**Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!**

Sign up by going to [OFP Newsletter](#)

Email frequency is around one a month

Find us on the web at: <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

## *Economics of Regional Meat Webinar Set for February 17*



[February 17, 2011: The Economics of Regional Meat \(Webinar\) Register Now!](#)

As the Wallace Center project “[Charting Growth: Sustainable Food Indicators](#)” reports, the concentration of the meat industry is staggering (e.g. in 2007 the 4 top beef packers controlled over 80% of the market). Those looking to build a sustainable regional food system must understand the tremendous economic forces that lead to this situation to succeed in their goal. This webinar is designed for attendees of all knowledge levels to increase the effectiveness of their regional efforts.

The webinar will begin with a brief picture of the meat business across the country to set the context for its impacts on a regional level. Then our presenters will identify a few specific, strategic barriers to Northeast regional meat production, and their programs, systems and ideas on how to alleviate these barriers. Topics in this section will include infrastructure (slaughterhouses), educational resources for producers, seasonality of beef production, and the required skill sets for sustainable processing. For our more experienced attendees, our presenters will then present a detailed, nuts and bolts focus on slaughterhouses and the culture of beef production. Finally our presenters will address your specific questions.

Though the presentation will focus on the Northeast, the content can be applied wherever you live. [Register Now!](#)

## *Snohomish County announces year round market*



Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon recently announced the creation of a 60,000 square-foot agriculture center that will house a full-time, year-round indoor farmers' market, commercial kitchen and processing facility as well as farm-product distribution hub.

The facility, on Grand Avenue between Hewitt Avenue and Wall Street in downtown Everett and near the Everett Public Market, will anchor a 180-unit housing project being constructed by Dargey Enterprises.

The Grand Avenue project is cutting edge in the world of farmers' markets and is unique in its features, which includes a large commercial kitchen that agricultural producers can use on site to make products to sell at the market or load on delivery trucks.

“This project will allow consumers to buy local, farm-fresh goods at a one-stop shop right here in Snohomish County – an effort we have been striving for to keep farming in Snohomish County economically viable,” said Reardon, who has led the region through the development of a sustainable agriculture action plan and vision.

“When you buy here – from salads to soups and from beef to beans – you will know where your food came from and have the opportunity to know the farmer who grew it,” he said. [Full announcement here \(PDF\)](#)

## *WSU Extension Ag Tax Law webinar, February 7*



The Tax Relief Act of 2010 has a number of changes to the tax code important to agricultural producers. In this Ag in Uncertain Times webinar, we will be discussing the key changes in the new Tax Law and how they affect agricultural producers. Many of the changes will have a direct impact on depreciation and expensing options available to businesses. The discussion will be useful for all sizes and types of farms and ranches.

Presenters will be: Gary J. Hoff, Extension Specialist – Taxation, at the University of Illinois, who will be providing an overview of the various changes relevant to agricultural producers and Dr. Ruby Ward from the Department of Applied Economics at Utah State University who will take a closer look at the special depreciation rule which allows 100% of the cost of new assets to be expensed in the year purchased and how the election of this option could affect the operations depreciation and cash flow.

For details on how to register for this informative opportunity, go to: [Ag in Uncertain Times](#)

## ***Twelve Months to Use the Enhanced Easement Incentive!***

Congress just recently renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers and ranchers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation agreement. The incentive, which had expired at the end of 2009, helps work with willing landowners in Washington to conserve productive agricultural lands. Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2011 to take advantage of a significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation agreement to permanently protect important natural or historic resources on their land. When landowners donate a conservation easement to a qualified land trust, they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs, while foregoing future development rights. The enhanced incentive applies to a landowner's federal income tax. This opportunity:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;
- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit: [www.lta.org/easementincentive](http://www.lta.org/easementincentive).

## ***Season Extension Techniques for Market Gardeners***



Market gardeners can grow crops year-round with season extension techniques. Cultural practices, plastic mulches, row covers, and low tunnels provide growers with earlier, later, and higher-quality produce that can capture more markets and demand higher prices. High tunnels or hoophouses, which are essentially unheated greenhouses, have gained increased interest around the country in the past 10 years. Many growers now consider hoophouses essential to the success of their market gardens; they are the focus of research projects, workshops, and new manuals.

[This publication](#) describes these season extension techniques and provides sources for equipment, supplies, and further information.

Download the PDF by going to: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/seasonext.pdf>

USDA recently updated the pilot hoop tunnel funding program that awarded over \$13 million to 43 states. Washington was awarded just over \$150,000 for 25 projects. Additional states are expected to participate in the seasonal high tunnel pilot in FY 2011. In most cases, NRCS provides financial assistance equivalent to approximately half the cost of the high tunnel, but historically underserved producers may receive 75 to 90 percent financial assistance. For information on availability and how to apply, [visit your local Washington USDA Service Center](#).

## ***WA Disaster Designation recently declared for 20 ag counties***

A Secretarial Disaster Designation recently triggers eligibility for Washington farmers and ranchers to receive federal financial relief for crop losses. The Secretary of Agriculture declared 20 Washington counties natural disaster areas due to multiple devastating weather events starting in April of 2010. The designation allows agricultural producers in the designated and adjacent counties to request low-interest emergency loans and direct payments under the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment (SURE) program. "

Washington producers experienced losses to multiple crops as a result of combined effects of excessive rain, frosts, freezes, unseasonably cold weather, and high winds," said Judy Olson, Farm Service Agency State Executive Director in Spokane.

Interested farmers and ranchers may contact their local FSA office listed under U.S. Department of Agriculture for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for emergency loans and other programs. More information and a [map](#) of designated counties are also available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/wa>.

## ***2011 Legislative Session is currently underway!***



The 2011 105 day legislative session is currently underway having begun on January 10. As always, there are hundreds of bills that are being introduced, many of them affecting agriculture and the folks who farm. The Office of Farmland Preservation (OFP) tracks and monitors legislation throughout the session. You can view what OFP is tracking by going to: [2011 OFP Tracked Legislation](#)

If you are interested in engaging in the legislative process, below are several ways for you to make your voice heard. First, you can utilize the legislature's toll free hotline: 800-562-6000. You can leave a message, but only for the legislator from your district. If you want to contact other legislators from other districts, it is best to call their office directly or email.

For information on a specific bill or its content, go to: [Legislative Bill Information](#)

For information on receiving emails on bill status, schedules, etc. go to: [Legislative Subscription](#)

To view legislative hearings, or find a hearing you missed, go to TVW at <http://www.tvw.org>.

Contact information for House of Representatives members is [here](#), and for the Senate, click [here](#)

If you have questions about a bill or need assistance, feel free to contact us here at: [jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov](mailto:jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov) or 360.407.7474

## ***NRCS Farmland Preservation Applications due March 4***

March 4 is the application cut-off date for several the Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) and several conservation programs, including five new Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) for comprehensive nutrient management (confined animal), nutrient management, irrigation water management, conversion to organic farming and forestry, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced.

NRCS is seeking FRPP proposals from local, state and federally recognized tribal governments and non-governmental organizations interested in working together to acquire conservation easements on farms and ranches. FRPP helps communities preserve farm or ranch land and cultural resources. The program offers a way to keep prime farmland in agriculture use and, at the same time, keep farming and ranching communities thriving by relieving development pressures.

For full details on programs and to see if you qualify, go to: [WA State NRCS News Releases](#)



## ***Whidbey Island farm protected through donated easement***



Captain Gary Fisher along with his wife of 52 years, Lois, recently donate a conservation easement PCC Farmland Trust to permanently protect their 15 acre farm, Camelot Downs. The farm breeds colonial sheep, geese, ducks, chickens, game and guinea fowl, doves and dogs — all guarded by trained llamas! The conservation easement permanently removes development rights, and guarantees the property will be used for organic agricultural production. As a legal obligation, the Trust will steward the property forever. The Fishers also made a substantial financial gift for the property's ongoing stewardship, and plan to transfer ownership to their farm manager when they can no longer farm.

PCC Farmland Trust is a community-supported land trust working to save local organic farmland. The Farmland Trust preserves Northwest farmland threatened by development and helps move it into sustainable and organic agricultural production. Founded in 1999, PCC Farmland Trust has secured the future of hundreds of acres of organic farmland in Washington State. [www.pccfarmlandtrust.org](http://www.pccfarmlandtrust.org)

## ***Western Washington Wine Grape Growers Workshop***

**SAVE THE DATE – Western Washington Wine Grape Growers Workshop**

**March 30, 2011, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM, WSU Mount Vernon NWREC**

Meet the new WSU State-wide Viticulture Specialist, Dr. Michelle Moyer and the WSU Viticulture & Enology Program Director, Dr. Thomas Henick-Kling

Review the 2010 Production Season – Discuss pest and management issues that are significant in western Washington, including Powdery Mildew, Botrytis, Yellow Jackets and Proper Spray Technologies

Taste and Evaluate New Varieties – Get information on new grape varieties that may be suitable for western Washington and evaluate wines made from these grapes in established regions in the world.

For more information, go to <http://maritimefruit.wsu.edu/GrapeWorkshopAgenda.pdf>



## ***Free Whole Foods Market Meat Producers Workshop***

Whole Foods Market is hosting a day-long workshop for Meat Producers (specifically lamb, pork and grass-fed beef) who are interested in learning about the opportunity to do business with Whole Foods Market. More information will be coming soon about registration, etc. but I was hoping that you could start spreading the word to producers that you know who might be interested in attending. Here are the details:



**What:** Whole Foods Market Meat Producers Workshop at

**Where:** Whole Foods Market Interbay, 2001 15th Ave., West Seattle, WA 98119

**Date:** March 9, 2011,

**Time:** 8:30 – 4 pm

**Registration:** FREE

For registration and more information, contact Denise Breyley at [denise.breyley@wholefoods.com](mailto:denise.breyley@wholefoods.com) or 425.957.6814

## ***In short - In short - In short***

### **Westsound Small Farms Expo!**

March 5, 8:00am-5:00pm

Save the date for the first Westsound Small Farms Expo! Classes for farmers and ranchers. Topics include agritourism, season extension techniques, managing mud, pastured poultry, network with local farmers, visit vendors and much, much more!

Registration info: <http://kitsap.wsu.edu> or [shannon.harkness@wsu.edu](mailto:shannon.harkness@wsu.edu) or (360) 337-7157.

### **Does your direct marketing small farm need the web?**

[Small Farm Central](#) provides professional web services (websites and e-commerce) to direct-marketing farmers.

Each site is administered through an online control panel that turns any farmer into a web developer.

To view samples, testimonials, and pricing information, go to: [Small Farm Central](#)

### **Investing for Farm Families, learn with Extension Online**

This online class gives farm families the information they need to make strategic decisions while weaving together farm and personal investments. Developed by Extension educators across the nation, the 8-lesson course helps farm families plan for a financially stable future that meets long-term needs. Participants can work at their own pace, with each lesson taking less than an hour.

For details on how to participate, go to:

[http://www.extension.org/pages/Investing\\_for\\_Farm\\_Families](http://www.extension.org/pages/Investing_for_Farm_Families)

# WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## ***Beginning Farmer/Rancher Bond Financing Program***



*Opening doors to a better life*

Washington acquire agricultural property at lower interest rates.

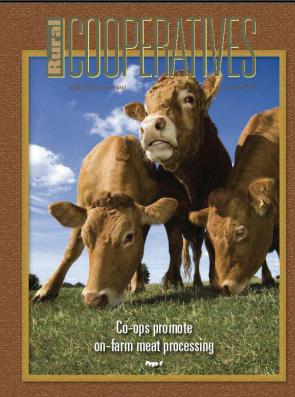
The Washington State Housing Finance Commission (the "Commission") in partnership with Northwest Farm Credit Services is offering loans for qualifying beginning farmers/ranchers that can be combined with other loans, grants and other sources of funds. The Beginning Farmer/Rancher Bond Program (the "Program") is a tax-exempt bond program designed to assist beginning farmers/ranchers in the state of

### **Who is eligible?**

Individuals or families who have not had any direct or indirect ownership interest in farmland in the operation of which such individual materially participated. Or, those who have owned and operated a farm or ranch that was less than 30% of the county's median farm size. Also, a beginning farmer/rancher must be at least 18 years old, a Washington State resident, and must have sufficient education, training and experience in the type of farming operation for which the bond is requested.

For more information and details on eligibility, go to: <http://www.wshfc.org/FarmRanch/index.htm>

## ***Receive the USDA Rural Cooperative Magazine***



**Rural Cooperative Magazine (PDF)** This magazine is published every other month and focuses on cooperatives and issues facing cooperatives.

The mission of USDA's Cooperative Services Program is to promote understanding and use of the cooperative form of business as a viable organizational option for marketing and distributing agricultural products. They serve cooperative members, directors, management, educational institutions, organizations, rural residents, and all others with an interest in the cooperative form of business and strive to assist them to effectively use cooperatives to improve their economic well-being and quality of life.

For more information, go to: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/csdir.htm>

## ***In short - In short - In short***

### **2011 Western Washington Potato Workshop - Friday, February 25**

Workshop will be held at the WSU Northwestern Washington Research & Extension Center, Mount Vernon, WA

An application has been made for 5 WSDA Re-certification Course Credits

[Click here for the brochure.](#)

### **4-H Scholarships**

Eligible applicants must be graduating from high school or completing their GED this year and have been in 4-H at least two years. Scholarships can be used at any post-secondary educational institution.

For more information, go to:  
<http://4h.wsu.edu/members/scholar.htm>

### **7th Annual WA Farm Bureau Labor Conference**

February 16, Central WA University in Ellensburg - the only conference dedicated to the labor and employment needs of Washington's seasonal employers. Washington Attorney General Rob McKenna will provide the keynote address. Details available by going to:

<http://www.wsfb.com/educationtraining>

"OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES."